



Whatcom Weeds

Whatcom County Noxious Weed Control Board 322 N. Commercial St. Bellingham WA 98225
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SULFUR CINQUEFOIL

Potentilla recta

THREAT: Sulfur cinquefoil, a native to Eurasia, was introduced to North America about 100 years ago. Sulfur cinquefoil invades meadows, pastures, open forest, roadsides and other disturbed areas. It spreads easily by seed and can become abundant in a very short time, forming large stands with little other vegetation. It is unpalatable to livestock and wildlife, allowing it to more easily outcompete grazed vegetation. Sulfur cinquefoil spreads by seed, although root fragments may resprout if transported by farm equipment to suitable sites. The small seeds can be moved by vehicles, animals and clothing.

DESCRIPTION: Sulfur cinquefoil is a tap-rooted, short-lived herbaceous perennial. A member of the Rose family, it is closely related to ornamental and native potentillas. The plant grows upright, about 1 to 3 feet tall, with one or more stems. The flowers are ½ to 1 inch across, and have five light sulfur-yellow petals. The petals are heart-shaped. The leaves have five to seven toothed leaflets in a palmate arrangement, about 2-4 inches long and ½ inch wide. Both the stem and the leaves are covered with stiff hairs. Sulfur cinquefoil can be confused with several native species. It is distinguished by the lighter yellow color of the flowers and by the stiff hairs covering the plant.

MANAGEMENT OPTIONS: Sulphur cinquefoil can be controlled using mechanical and chemical methods. Plants can be hand dug, as long as care is taken to remove the root crown. Repeated cultivation can be effective in controlling this plant. However, mowing is not recommended. Some herbicides are effective in controlling sulfur cinquefoil. Contact the weed control board for chemical recommendations.

